



## **Trade Show Report**

### **Go West Summit – Tahoe, NV**

February 25 – 29, 2024

#### **Montana Representation:**

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard

#### **Overview:**

- Go West Summit gathers international and international inbound receptive tour operators and travel agencies that focus on offering tours to the 18 western states in the United States. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs.
- Participation was down from suppliers in the GAW region. I was the only one there from Montana, which is not great. We need better representation from throughout the state to make an impact.
- Glacier Country was matched with 27 buyers for 12-minute appointments down from last year, but that is by choice. Last year, there were too many appointments.

#### **Trends:**

- Pent-up demand is real, especially in European countries. But the strong dollar, our hotel rates and gas prices make other destinations more appealing.
- National Parks and rural destinations are back to a second or third visit to the US, but something that first-time travelers to the US are incorporating on itineraries.
- The NPS's vehicle reservation system and recreation.gov are still not working for international visitors who book 6 to 9 months in advance and need to know they can get into a national park before all the outlay of money.
- International visitors are attracted to Montana for its wildlife viewing, wide open spaces, scenic drives, soft adventure, and unique culture that includes cowboys and American Indians, as well as shopping.

#### **Recommendations for 2025 and beyond:**

- Keep educating our GC partners on the international travel trade and working with international inbound (receptive) tour operators. The visitor wants small, unique lodging options. Partners need to realize that it costs little to make their inventory available for the travel trade. We've added a few unique properties this year.
- We have talked about offering welcome pages on our website for our key international markets. Maybe revisit that if the budget allows.
- Recognize the developing need for multi-lingual step-on guides.

- Work with the state office on multi-lingual promotional materials; perhaps we can take their information on Glacier National Park and make it a one sheet we can use.
- Recommend attending Go West Summit: Palm Springs – January 2025.